LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1709
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The White Slave Traffic

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THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC

ENSLAVED PROSTITUTES

Many attempts have been made to define the prostitute type of woman, to describe the physical and mental (including moral) traits of the girls who enter the career of harlotry. Lombroso, who tried to present a unified picture of the born criminal, also made a similar attempt with regard to the delinquent woman, who is, according to his views, typically a prostitute.

If criminals and prostitutes do not conform to definite types to begin with—and I have seen no clear evidence that they do—it is nevertheless true, no doubt, that the sharing of certain experiences tends to make them more or less like others of their classes. When prostitutes are not distinguished from other women by clothing, ornaments, and cosmetics, and when they are not engaged in enticing actions peculiar to their calling (or when these actions are not any longer confined to them alone), it is nevertheless impossible to know them apart.

For the sake of the reader who may not be familiar with my Little Blue Books on prostitution in general, it is well to explain at the outset what a prostitute is. She is a woman (or he is a man) who repeatedly engages in sexual intercourse for hire with various persons. The strict amateur, no matter how erotically loose she may be, is not a prostitute. Neither is the concubine, who enters into sexual

connections which are intended to be permanent, or relatively so, although for one reason or another she has not the status of a wife.

With the enslaved wife and the enslaved concubine, as such, we are not particularly concerned here. The practice of selling girls to men who intend using them for their own sexual use and other convenience has been and still is widespread. It can be argued that the young woman in a civilized country who is married off for political or social reasons to a man whom she does not love is truly a "white slave." This is more especially the case if she has no opportunity to engage in flirtations or liaisons with men other than her husband. There is a modern idea that sexual relations without love are inherently immoral, and to this is sometimes joined the notion that they are necessarily moral whenever they arise out of love. Perhaps love may easily be defined, but at times it is difficult to know if an attraction is entitled to be called such; one may have known a fierce flame, never to be lighted again even by the person who inspired it, without, I suppose, being forevermore debarred from amorous satisfaction. At any rate, some proponents of "love is all" morality are inclined to be priggish and even prudish in their fashion.

It is interesting to notice that the Roman Catholic Church holds marriages contracted without mutual affection to be invalid, although not justifying divorce for a later failure of marital tenderness. How this doctrine has worked out in practice—with annulments to be easily obtained in the late Middle Ages, but

only at the cost of much money and influence since the Council of Trent—this is no place to consider in detail. Let it suffice to add that in some Roman Catholic countries aristocratic circles have widely approved the practice of seeking love outside the marriage bed.

A general purpose of marriage is the begetting of lawful progeny. Granting this, in a country of descent from the father where the control of conception is unknown or uncertain, it seems to follow that only the husband shall have access to his wife. Make this rule important, and it follows that women ought to be and are cloistered. And here, again, perhaps, we have "white slavery." Or, though admitted into society, women are supposed to be kept ignorant on certain subjects, to consider some topics of conversation which are open to men below or above them, to be extremely circumspect in their goings and comings. They wear chains which men do not.

Restrictions thus laid on respectable women are among the chief causes of prostitution. It was in order to preserve the purity of the family that Solon, the Athenian law-maker of the sixth pre-Christian century, provided the city with slave harlots. At least, this is the story which Plutarch tells in his Life of Solon. All extramarital relations with the wives and maidens of Athens were forbidden; but women brought into the city as slaves, who had been captured in war or purchased from slave dealers, were made available in public brothels at low cost.

It may be, as Iwan Bloch suggests, that the municipal monopoly of prostitution in Athens replaced the former control of this traffic by the priests, acting in the name of religion. This can be said with more certainty, that naked girls stood in the brothel to be chosen by any man who could pay the trifling fee. The scene may seem to modern readers a dreadful one, but in Athens it represented high moral aspirations. And the Greek notion is, after all, not extremely remote from our way of looking at sexual things; Christian preachers were to liken the brothel to a sewer which, however loathsome in itself, yet served the useful purpose of keeping the family pure.

One thing we may notice about the woman who is a prostitute simply because she or her mother has been captured in war: there is no reason to expect that we can find in her the stigmata of the born harlot. In a community where female slaves are plentiful, those chosen to fill brothels are no doubt better-looking (by the usual standards of the time and place) than those who are made kitchen drudges, and less attractive than those who are chosen to be concubines to the great. But inclination or lack of inclination toward erotic acts, or toward erotic promiscuity, counts for very little. Nobody asked Rhodopis or Dorica if she would not really prefer to be a governess instead of serving the erotic appetites of men. She might find that she would get along better if she tried hard to please men; if she was lucky she might fall into the hands of a generous lover and have luxuries lavished upon her; but mar-

riage was out of her reach, and she was not at liberty to choose chastity.

Enslaved prostitutes have been found in communities with culture at a much simpler level than that of classical Athens. For example, among African natives, most harlots are, probably to this day, real slaves. In some cases they are shut up in huts which may properly be called brothels. Winwood Reade tells of instances in which philanthropic African ladies took care of the interests of their villages by providing in their oral wills that some of their slaves should be communal property, to be used as harlots.

In various kingdoms, the ruler has enjoyed a monopoly of the prostitution traffic, receiving the net profits along with the other revenues attached to his office. The kings of Dahomey, along with some sultans of India, used to own prostitutes for profit. In many primitive communities where the harlots are not precisely slaves, they must give most of their earnings to chiefs and priests. Such taxes have persisted almost into our own day in "Christian" countries—I use inverted commas because we are sometimes reminded, when such matters are brought up for discussion, of the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's remark that Christianity has never been tried—something, by the way, that no Roman Catholic propagandist can afford to say, and that no Protestant is justified in saying if he wishes Christianity to have the credit for such occurrences during the past nineteen centuries as may happen to please him.

The girl slaves of ancient Greece were such, directly or indirectly, because of war, piracy, kidnaping, or the exposure of unwanted infants. Although it might not be profitable for a family to bring up a daughter as a free woman, those who found her abandoned sometimes thought it worth their while to give her the food and clothing of a slave so that they might later sell her.

In classical Rome, many girl and boy slaves were used as prostitutes, the latter serving to attract homosexuals. Some of them were kept in brothels, some in separate apartments, but their status in either case was the same. Dion Chrysostom, a Greek rhetorician of the Roman Empire, condemned the forcing of boys and girls into such a calling; but it was not the speeches and sermons of moralists, pagan or Christian, that finally brought legalized slave prostitution to an end so much as it was great changes in economic and social conditions. The ideal of the pure family was no less honored in the Christian world—or ought we to say the world that had caught the germ of what may some day turn into Christianity?—than it had been in classical Athens.

Even among the more modest of Christian apologists there is a tendency to claim for their religion credit for the destruction of homosexuality and slavery. The ground for the homoeroticism claim is simply that the center of European civilization has moved northward from the Graeco-Italian zone to the lands settled by the heirs of those ancient and Pagan Germani who punished sodomy with death.

That Christianity is fatal to slavery can hardly be believed by any person who has studied the history of the African natives brought by force to America.

The trade in slaves, among them boys and girls destined for prostitution, had a continuous existence from ancient times through the Middle Ages. Some of the leading markets in olden days were Tyre, Cyprus, Delos in Greece, Rome, and Alexandria in Egypt. Negro slaves were brought to Rome from Carthage, and some of them were used in the business of sex exploitation. Women were exposed for sale in the temples of Venus and in open market places; they were treated as wares like any other, and prospective purchasers were permitted to make thorough examinations of these amorous goods. Brothel-keepers who preferred to rent women for a fixed term rather than to buy them outright were accommodated, and they could sublease in their turn. Or two or more could join to speculate in prostitutes. The contracts involved had the same legal standing as others arising out of commercial transactions.

Under Christianity, it became an ideal that Christians should not enslave or keep in slavery members of their own faith. Like many other Christian ideals, it was somewhat out of accord with actual practice. There were Christian serfs under the control of Christian owners in Europe until past the middle of the nineteenth century. Whatever the legal theory might be, the masters were quite generally in a position to make use of the serf girls for their

own appetite and their own pockets. As for the United States, slave prostitutes could be found in the brothels of such cities as New Orleans and Newport News before the Civil War. Although these were "black" or "light colored" harlots who were put willy-nilly into houses of prostitution, perhaps it is relevant to mention them in a history of what is now called white slavery.

Recently in Peking prostitution has been carried on largely by singing girls bought young from poor parents. These are like the enslaved harlots of antiquity, many of whom were taught the musical arts as well as those of self-decoration and of love. It may be remarked that the *hetairai*, who were slaves or at least under special restrictions as foreigners, often enjoyed more freedom of locomotion and thought than the respectable and cloistered wives of old Greece. Some of them were honored intellectual companions of great men; their very infamy relieved them from the obligation of being properly ignorant in a ladylike way. Aspasia, who became virtually the wife of Pericles in Athens, was accused of irreligion, and it took all his influence to secure her acquittal. It is no wonder that some modern feminists have made a heroine of this woman who dared to think, and knew how; but she attracted Pericles by bodily beauty as well as intellectual charm, and if she had been ugly I dare say we should never have heard of her.

Cleverness in prostitutes was not much sought during the Middle Ages, except at certain times and places in the Moslem world.

Bodily attractiveness had always been the main thing, in any case. The stupid harlot even came to be preferred, when the step was taken from legally recognized slavery in the brothel to the virtual enslavement of nominally free girls.

Venetians, Byzantine Greeks, Jews, and Arabs were among the leading slave dealers of the medieval period. In the eighth century, there was an important traffic in girls at Rome, where they were purchased for the Moslems. Arab traders continued to bring this ware to the Christian city of Constantinople. Mohammedan countries were to remain into our own time large markets for young girls, black and white, both for brothels and for seraglios. A large trade in boys for sexual purposes developed in these lands, some being purchased as prostitutes or concubines, some to be castrated so that they might be trusted to act as harem guards.

PROSTITUTES SELF-ENSLAVED

Even in ancient times, there were besides the regular slave prostitutes women who, though formally free, gave up the proceeds of their traffic in their own bodies to men. It is true that at certain times and under some forms of marriage, the wife was practically a possession of her husband, and thus the married harlot was not far from being a slave. There was a great diversity of manners and morals in antiquity; all sorts of customs might

be found simultaneously in various parts of Greece; and if in one city a free man could not, under severe penalties, prostitute his wife, things might be quite different in a neighboring town. Besides, the ignoring or only occasional enforcement of laws regulating human behavior is by no means an American invention.

The case of the husband who is in a position to control his wife's conduct and who forces her to act as a harlot for the benefit of his pocketbook presents no great psychological difficulties. It is rather a widespread custom for the husband to lend one of his wives to a visiting friend, or to any traveler who asks him for hospitality. The requirement of the pure family (of arranging matters so that there may be no doubt about the paternity of the children) of course runs counter to wife-lending out of friendship or desire for gain. This requirement, even in the Christian world, is sometimes neglected. There can be no doubt, I think, that the core of "white slavery," of traffic in sex with women who are not legally slaves as the subjects, is right here.

Given on the one hand a fully observed moral rule that the wife must be subject to the husband and on the other hand a stern requirement that the taint of bastardy be kept out of the legitimate family, a natural outgrowth is a relationship as of man and wife which is not such at law. It is "natural" in the sense that it has occurred quite frequently.

Our present moral ideas favor, if they do not absolutely require, a family arrangement in which the husband is the breadwinner and

the wife has charge of the household, supervising it if not doing most of the work herself. Sometimes the wife brings in most of the income, but this is considered not quite proper, except if the husband is seriously and permanently ill. It is hardly necessary to point out that gentlemanly husbands are not supposed to derive any benefit from their wives' unchastity. In fact, ladylike wives are not supposed to be unchaste at all; which is to say that certain intimacies are reserved for their husbands (one wife to one husband) alone.

That the wife should forget these reservations is considered bad in most circles; that the husband should acknowledge knowing about her turpitude is worse; that he should profit by it is horrid. Well, there is a widespread prejudice among us to the effect that man must live. The prostitution of the wife (for separate fees, or sometimes for the opportunity to obtain and hold employment) may arise out of dire need. Or it may be largely due to the husband's laziness.

The free and unmarried prostitute ought, perhaps, to know enough to keep her earnings for herself; this rule, good in general, seems especially fitting for an occupation of peculiar hazards. The fact remains that harlots as a rule have by no means been savers of money. That is understandable; they are fond of fine garments, of ornaments, of wine. The puzzling thing is that they have quite voluntarily given up a large part of their fees to men friends.

The prostitute's bully—such is the historical

term, perhaps not much now used in brothel circles—was her sweetheart, her darling. The Dutch *boel* and the German *Buhler*, which mean lover, paramour, are probably related to the word. I think it is significant that it has come to mean a rough, overbearing person. On the one hand, so far as the bully was of use in the prostitution business, he was the protector of the harlot, the person who saw that she was not cheated or mishandled by drunken patrons, the "bouncer." On the other hand, he was the privileged person who was permitted to rob and deal brutally with the prostitute, not because of legal rights (though these might exist if he happened also to be her husband) but because she allowed him to dispose of her earnings and her person.

As we consider the bully or petticoat pensioner or "dear man" (as he is called in various languages ancient and modern) or sweet man or squire of the body or ruffian (though *rufien* and *ruffiano* in the Romance languages are applied more especially to the pimp or pander), we are led to ask some questions about the psychology of women. Is the widespread domination exercised over their sex by the other merely an expression of the greater muscular strength men possess? Or do women want to be dependent? If so, is it merely because they are observing a moral tradition, or is there some deep and absolute constitutional need in them for such dependence? Do they perchance want the men they love to be able to deal cruelly with them?

It is generally taken for granted that per-

sonal attractiveness in a man counts for less with women than that in a woman counts with men. In view of the extremely widespread slavery to bullies into which prostitutes fling themselves, we may perhaps have to revise our opinion about this. It is not altogether fair, I will concede, to seek in the brothel answers to questions about women in general. Yet there is one excuse for doing so, that the prostitute is in a sense below current prejudices, and therefore tends to reflect the essentially feminine as opposed to the conventionally ladylike. At the same time, we may suppose that free harlots are as a class weak-willed and responsive to suggestion, that they fall readily into the accepted customs of their calling, and that some of them take bullies to themselves because Meg and Gertie are so provided.

This at any rate can be said, that "white slavery" is to a large part voluntary. It is foolish of the girls, no doubt, and perhaps it is foolish of them to be prostitutes at all, if they can help it.

Besides the slavery of the bully or dear man, there is the slavery of the brothel keeper or "madame." Sometimes, as we have seen, the latter has the full weight of the law behind it: the girls are chattels, to be bought and sold at will, to be tied up and flogged if their conduct is not approved of. Or else, at the other extreme, such slavery as exists may depend upon the cunning of the brothel keeper, the weakness of the prostitute. In between, there is the condition in which the girls are required to stay within the brothel and the keeper or manage-

of it is authorized to keep order there and to maintain discipline on his own account, with regard to the prostitutes. This has usually occurred when workmen were subjected to the rule of the master, though nominally free.

During the Middle Ages, the Lombard bankers often had a side line of girls. Many rulers kept prostitutes in the brothels, whether they wanted to stay or not, because of the advantages to the public revenue. It was a time when people were as a rule supposed to follow the occupations of their fathers; and the brothel-born girls inevitably tended to be drawn into the calling of their mothers.

But if the governments of medieval Europe in general supported prostitution, they sometimes made attempts to suppress or minimize it. Severe penalties against pimps and bullies were quite the rule during the second half of the Middle Ages. There was in Rome during the eleventh century a law that any person who sold a girl into prostitution should be heavily fined, and have a foot cut off if payment was not made.

A Spanish edict by Alphonso IX in the twelfth century ordered that *ruffiani* or bullies should be flogged, imprisoned, or driven out of the kingdom, and that the prostitutes who supported them should be publicly whipped. Later laws in Spain and Italy were of the same general tenor. They show that harlots and bullies continued to associate, and that the authorities always looked upon their relationship with great disfavor. There were a number of laws providing that mothers might not benefit by

the unchastity of their daughters, but sometimes an added clause excepted those mothers whom poverty forced to sell their daughters' bodily favors. Men and women who recruited girls for brothels were often harshly dealt with; flogging, branding, mutilating were usual punishments; sometimes a panderess was forced to walk naked through the town, in order that chastity might be encouraged.

Recruiting for the brothel, when it ceased to be a matter of going to a public market and choosing the girls who seemed most likely to attract men and who could be bought or rented at a reasonable price, presented difficulties. There were, indeed, hereditary vagabond classes, proletarian families whose ancestral tradition was one of living always at the edge of want, of not being able to afford the virtues of ladies and gentlemen. Some climbed out of this class, even in the most rigid days of social stratification, and some slipped into it from higher circles.

But the patrons of the brothel in civilized countries have always been quick to demand fresh faces, girls not quite the same as those to be found in their native towns. The supplying of girls from far away became important in the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, the Mediterranean cities welcomed blonde Flemish girls; and harlots from Germany, especially Suabia, were in steady demand. But it was above all in the lands of Islam that female slaves of all hues and of many different tongues could be seen. There were girls from eastern Asia, from Georgia and Circassia

(where beauties fit for a sultan's seraglio were to be found), from northern and inner Africa, from various Christian countries.

Although roads were generally bad in medieval Europe and traveling dangerous, the peddlers and minstrels and acrobats and doxies often wandered far. A vagabond girl usually was accompanied by a man; he might be her father, but more probably he was her husband or simply her bully—it didn't make much difference which. Also there were troupes of girls, managed by a clever impresario, who was perhaps also a banker or a seller of spices from far-away islands.

Panders and panderesses got into trouble because there was no absolutely clear line between families which were considered depraved and those of more or less respectability. If a merchant had a young daughter whose head was of just the right golden shade to make an Italian nobleman loosen his purse-strings and if she resented the stern parental discipline which irked her adolescent restiveness, a clever bawd might persuade her to flee from her German home to the delights of a Roman brothel. This was a dangerous thing to do; there was less risk in getting girls from the lowest orders of society.

But as feudalism decayed, much confusion of social classes resulted. The records of medieval Venice reveal that both nobles and priests lived there as bullies. Aretino tells of noble bawds in Rome during the Renaissance period. A curious thing about the Middle Ages is that girls living in brothels often had bullies, so

that at least two people shared in her profits, not to mention what went to the government or the feudal lord.

In modern times, it is usual for a courtesan to be "enslaved" either by the brothel keeper, who keeps her in his power by overcharging her for board and clothes and ornaments, or by her sweet man, who depends on her love for him. But the French girls in Argentina, according to Albert Londres, are sometimes put into brothels by their bullies.

The modern bawd often finds it worth while to conduct an employment agency, especially one for domestics. One reason is that chambermaids are, like waitresses, especially likely to be semi-professional prostitutes. For the most part they have worked for low wages, and their occupation has at once led them to see much of at least comparative luxury and to be well informed on methods of acquiring pretty dresses and necklaces. The more picturesque part of the bawd's work as employment agent, that of seducing inexperienced girls, has attracted the greater interest.

Thus, in *The Spectator*, the famous English periodical of the early eighteenth century, the story is told of the girl at the coach office who is asked by a kind-looking lady all about herself, her character, her knowledge of the Catechism—and the lady is a notorious bawd. Such recruiting methods were encouraged by the English tradition, then beginning to harden, that a girl who had once taken part in illicit sexual intercourse, no matter what the circumstances, could no longer be treated as a decent

human being. It was helped along by the notion, fully established in mid-Victorian England, that respectable girls ought not to know anything at all about sex except perhaps that it was a vaguely disagreeable part of marriage. And so it was that bawds found it worth while, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to become friendly with girls coming out of Sunday schools. Not that familiarity with the Bible is even now any sort of guarantee against breaches of the accepted moral code, but the girls who go to Sunday school are usually of the middle class. Poor people cannot afford to provide fine Sunday clothes and nickels or dimes for the collection plate for their children. This fact, by the way, provides the basis for the claim that the average criminal has had little religious instruction: he has kept away from the Sunday school because he has had to do without shoes and to wear torn clothes on the first day of the week. The proletarian class, which provides more than its proportionate share of thieves and harlots, is as a rule highly superstitious, but its acquaintance with theological dogma depends upon the amount of official religious instruction which is thrust upon it.

The bawd and the bully are generally shrewd individuals who have come out of the slums or their rural equivalent. They understand that, in a trade which if not altogether under the ban of the law is still far from respectable, people who are not bound by the middle-class moral standards have the best chance of getting rich without working hard. In eighteenth-

century France, when abbés (jobless ecclesiastics and semi-ecclesiastics) were numerous, some of them became pimps and bullies. Penniless noblemen have drifted into these occupations. The great French poet François Villon, who certainly associated with cheats and highwaymen, seems to have been a bully. One of his poems, which bears the title "Ballade of Villon and of Fat Maggie"—it is omitted from the expurgated English editions—tells of living with and at the expense of a prostitute. Sometimes, when the narrator gets angry with his Maggie, he beats her, and she likes him all the better for it.

THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN

By now the reader has probably decided whether or not the phrase "white slavery" is justified as to nominally free prostitutes who are under the control of bullies or brothel keepers. It is not, at any rate, though it is often said to be, the invention of sensational journalists. Rather it is the translation of a French phrase, *traite des blanches*, first used in 1764 by an Inspector of Police named Marais. (At least, I know of no earlier use.) The French words mean "traffic in white women," and the phrase was evidently made on the analogy of *traite des noirs*, "traffic in Negroes." The traffic in blacks (to translate this literally) was of course a slave trade. *Traite des blanches* does not necessarily imply slavery except in that free women can hardly be called the subjects of a traffic or trade.

Although "white slavery" was originally meant to be a translation of the French words used in an official document, it is less satisfactory than the phrase it renders. The "white" is unessential, for the problem is exactly the same with regard to legally free women of Negro, American Indian, Mongolian, or Melanesian race. Our so-called white slave laws in this country do not specify the color of the girls or women involved. The "slavery" is somewhat misleading in most cases. Often it is sheer nonsense. It is true that genuine slavery still exists, especially in parts of Africa and Asia, and that some of the slaves are kept in brothels; but it is not usually of these that we think when we talk about white slavery, and few if any of them are of the Caucasian race.

In a loose and figurative sense, it is well enough to say that a woman is enslaved by her love for a certain man, so that she does foolish things in order to please him. Loosely, too, it can be said that a girl is so bound by her early environment that she cannot possibly will to be other than a prostitute. But in neither case does that condition exist which a sociologist calls slavery.

Not long ago, I read several short newspaper articles about a girl who was arrested for having killed a man and then released without being brought to trial when she said that this man had forced her into prostitution. What actually occurred, I do not know; it is not clear why she could not simply have walked out of the brothel, if she was staying in one, and then made a complaint to the police, if there was

really one to make. Harlots who tell lurid stories of white slavery often have something to conceal, and this something usually includes their own willingness.

A girl goes lightheartedly into a situation which she thinks of merely as novel and enjoyable, then realizes that she has ruined her reputation, and that she cannot help herself at all except by accusing a seducer or, preferably, a ravisher. Such is the origin of many a conviction for rape or "white slavery." Men go on trial who are convicted at the outset; the whole jury panel is filled with high moral feeling, and trivial technicalities about proof beyond a reasonable doubt are conveniently forgotten. I have recently read long accounts of trials in which just this seems to have occurred, although it must be confessed that newspaper reports of sex cases are usually expurgated in such a way that the reader must trust a great deal to his imagination in reaching a mental verdict. Still, the average reader is sure and voluble as to what occurred and as to what forms of death are too good for the villain involved.

I will not attempt to portray bawds and bullies as saintly persons whose faces ought to decorate our postage stamps. Often they are of the criminal class. At the least, they are lazy people who like to enjoy themselves, even though they have not inherited great fortunes. It can be said of the gigolo—such is the present polite name for a man who lives off women—that he honors the virtue which is perhaps next to godliness, that of physical cleanliness.

To succeed in his profession (as the advertisements dealing with antiseptics and with soap containing carbolic acid have so far failed to point out) he must be free from halitosis and body odor. Indeed, a good gigolo spends half his time at the barber's. This trait observers in Buenos Aires and New York have pointed out.

"White slavery" is sometimes used as a mere euphemism for prostitution, especially in the brothel. Often it connotates an international traffic. The history of this runs back at least as far as the time when Phoenician ships controlled the trade of the Mediterranean Sea. We have seen something of the trade in slave girls. The modern traffic in free prostitutes began as soon as actual slavery became rare in Europe, but it first took on something of its present day appearance during the eighteenth century.

It was probably in France that the business of procuring girls for brothels and private country houses then became most important. Women traveled through the country in search of promising youngsters; they talked to girls on the streets, in the lobbies of the theatres, in and around churches, at country fairs, wherever people congregated. There was a widespread business in the renting of clothes and jewels; the women who engaged in it seem to have been bawds for the most part. Occasionally we find a hint, or, in the contraband anticlerical books, an open accusation, that priests took advantage of their position as confessors to participate in the traffic. It was not always

safe to let one's daughter become intimate with an impecunious countess.

But then and there, as here and now, the inexperienced and virginal girl by no means made up the chief source of supply; it was rather the class of semi-professional harlots, together with that of girls who had been seduced (or who preferred to describe what had happened so) and cast astray. The kidnaping of girls to be exploited in brothels has been going on for many centuries, just as the seizing of both children and adults for the sake of ransoms has; but the former has for a long time been more dangerous a crime than the latter. A person is held for ransom in a remote, inaccessible place, and usually for a short time. The brothel is usually located where the police can easily reach it. It may be possible to keep kidnaped girls terrified there, so that they will not venture to complain to the men they meet; but surely this sort of thing occurs more frequently in sensational stories than in the flesh-and-blood world. It happens more often in the stories told to kind-hearted settlement workers and to probation officers than in cold fact.

Sex-hungry individuals do sometimes entice children with candy and other bribes; and since they are often too deeply clutched by mad internal compulsion to realize or heed the danger they are incurring, they may keep them locked in for weeks at a time. And I do not doubt that some of the stories about children who have been kept in brothels by force are true. But the least mythical accounts of this

sort—such for example as the one given by Sanger about girls of eleven or twelve in mid-Victorian England—add that the compulsion lasts for two or three weeks, after which the subjects find themselves free to depart if they will. It seems to me probable enough that brothel keepers will refuse to take the chances involved unless the little girls have been carefully picked in the first place. The parents must ordinarily have placed themselves in such a position that they cannot afford to complain, or that their complaints will go unheeded. And where the age of consent is high, where it is a serious crime to have carnal knowledge of any girl under eighteen or twenty-one, with or without her consent—unless public opinion fails to support the law—the prostitution of children in likely to be rare.

About the Italian *padroni* in New York I derived my first information from an Horatio Alger story called, I think, *Phil the Fiddler*, in which the hero is required to play his violin on the streets and to bring the money kind people give him to his master. As I have since learned from less juvenile sources, the *padroni* prostituted both boys and girls; they induced homeless Sicilian children to go with them, or paid the parents of likely ones for the privilege of making the boys' and girls' fortune in the Golden West. Children alone in a new land whose customs and language they did not understand were usually afraid to run away, even if maltreated.

Here is one reason for the international nature of the traffic in "white slaves." Another

is that brothel patrons demand diversity. A third is that the harlot can get higher fees in some countries than she can in others. This is probably the most important reason of all. It is what sent many thoroughly free prostitutes to America in the nineteenth century from Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, and other European countries. And going far away from home tends to break down moral taboos. The parents and the neighborhood Mesdames Grundy are left behind, the weight of their respectability perhaps varying like Newtonian gravitation in inverse ratio to the square of the distance. A Patricia or Bridget who was a good girl in County Cork, or not very bad, anyway, might come to the rouge pots and other paraphernalia appropriate to the business of insuring the purity of other people's families in New York.

Country folk in Ireland still cling to the notion that in America the streets are paved with gold, and that one need not have been especially blessed by the fays to secure an ample supply of that much sought after metal. Picture Bridget earning no very princely sum (considering what money is capable of buying in the United States) at the making of beds and the sweeping of bedrooms. Christmas comes, and she cannot buy the presents for her family in Ireland which seem proper to be sent from a land of gold. She has already learned that there are more profitable occupations connected with beds and bedrooms. Perhaps a persuasive young man helps her to make up her mind. She is, anyway, in a land where manners and

morals are not precisely those of her native land; where, therefore, as I have known immigrants to reason, there are no manners and morals at all.

Prostitution is often pictured, especially by writers of Socialist sympathies, as almost entirely a product of extreme poverty, as resulting from a choice between shame and starvation. I think it comes more often from a choice between dreary work paid for in wages allowing of very few luxuries and an easy life (or one that lack of experience pictures as easy) with bright clothes and glittering ornaments. I do not say this to condemn prostitutes; it is quite comprehensible that even a child of the slums should ask more of life than the privilege of living, or rather, merely existing. And though Socialist writers put the matter too strongly, it is quite possible that Socialism would make prostitution rare. We are told that it has already done so in Russia. By prostitution, as I have pointed out at the outset, I mean something more than extramarital sexual intercourse, although the Bolsheviks are said to condemn all of this as *bourgeois*.

In the United States, available evidence tends to show, the growing economic and social independence of women has reduced prostitution, and the same thing is true of the industrially advanced countries of Europe. It may be that as women learn to look out for themselves and as the clinging-vine type passes quite out of fashion, the bully will find it impossible to induce girls to enslave themselves voluntarily to him. Possibly the male (heterosexual) prosti-

tute is to become widespread; already the gigolo — who may be nothing more than a hired dancing partner and escort, but who is likely to be something else — has attracted a great deal of attention. And if — who can tell? — respectable husbands are to be kept in locked rear apartments by the fully enfranchised women of the twenty-first century, perhaps our male descendants who venture to write sonnets and paint landscapes (forgetting the modesty appropriate to their sex) will all be of a despised class.

Mere phantasy, of course — but who has ever been able to avoid setting down mere phantasy when writing about the "white slave" traffic? The subject was first brought into general notice during the 1870's, and in 1885 the *Pall Mall Gazette* proved that the public is interested in sexual matters when it ventilated the matter thoroughly. (The idea that writing about erotic scandals may prove profitable is much older than our tabloid newspapers, though less old than the scandals themselves.)

Of the various international conferences from 1875 down to the World War of 1914-1918 there is no need to speak here, nor of the societies formed to suppress the trade in prostitutes. The important thing is that public opinion was aroused, and that some of the moral energy was used up in getting laws passed.

The most stupid and most unjust in its workings is, without much question, the Mann Act of the United States. Intended chiefly to hinder the exploitation of prostitutes, above all

those brought from foreign countries, it was so drawn up and has been so interpreted as to punish many acts of simple fornication. In a recent case, two prostitutes were charged with violations, and thereupon offered to testify against the men said to have exploited and transported them. On the whole, girls of this class are neither firm nor veracious above the average; that fear of being punished themselves may lead them to commit perjury does not seem extremely improbable. That the Mann Act has facilitated blackmail is a notorious fact; this is not surprising, when we consider how many men of all degrees of wealth and position have taken young women not their wives across state lines to hotels and boarding houses. The occurrences of most injury to good morals in the United States during this century have been, I should say, the passage of the Mann Act and that of the Eighteenth Amendment.

Dr. Howard B. Woolston, as investigator for the Bureau of Hygiene, examined the official records of one hundred representative aliens expelled from the United States as exploiters of women. "Not all of these, however," he says, "could properly be called instances of white slavery. Among the hundred, thirty-three cases were found in which evidence of fraud, force or duress were employed to dominate the victims." He does not say what the "evidence" may sometimes amount to.

A story by Guy de Maupassant, "The Odalisque of Senichou," tells how Hungarian and Bohemian girls were enticed to Turkish harems

and brothels during the nineteenth century. A not less interesting little book by the French journalist Albert Londres, *The Road to Buenos Aires*, deals with the recruiting of girls for South American houses of prostitution. This latter has nothing avowedly fictitious about it, but occasionally the author has let his imagination wander a bit. Londres insists that if the French prostitutes in Buenos Aires are slaves, it is because they are self-enslaved, or rather because the post-war conditions in France have made an apartment where hundreds of patrons visit them weekly a sort of Paradise to them, even if the net earnings go chiefly to pimps and procurers. He rightly insists that if there are girls who are willing to become harlots and men willing to patronize them, repressive laws operate to corrupt police forces rather than to do away with the traffic.

Other material on our subject is to be found in the publications of the League of Nations, which since 1920 has exercised, in the words of the Covenant, "the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children." By a Convention of 1921, ratified by many countries, the procuring of a girl under twenty-one for "immoral purposes," even with her consent, is forbidden.

During the years 1924 to 1926 a group of experts financed by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene investigated "white slavery" for the League of Nations. They reported that a traffic in women and children existed beyond a doubt, that this was international in

nature, and that it was facilitated by the existence of licensed brothels.

If prostitution is to become a rarity, there can be little doubt that women must enjoy great freedom; and already it is clear that the next generation will have sufficient scientific knowledge to permit this without in the least impairing the "purity of the family" in the sense of certain paternity. Still, it would be rash to prophesy that the commercialization of sex is now coming to an end, never to be revived.